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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - MIDDLE EAST

U.S. DEFICIT TURKEY

PARIS - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2004

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [¶1. MIDDLE EAST](#)
- [¶2. U.S. DEFICIT](#)
- [¶3. TURKEY](#)

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

PRESIDENT CHIRAC'S TELEVISED INTERVIEW LAST EVENING ON TURKEY, HIS "YES, BUT ONLY IF," AND THE OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EU IS TODAY'S NUMBER ONE LEAD STORY. INTERVIEWS AND COMMENTARIES ABOUND, ANALYZING THE PRESIDENT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN CONVINCING FRENCH OPINION AND PRESENTING THE PROS AND CONS OF TURKEY AS A EU MEMBER. (SEE PART C)

CENTRIST LA TRIBUNE INTERVIEWS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVE PIERRE LELLOUCHE FOR WHOM "CLOSING THE DOOR TO TURKEY WOULD BE A POLITICAL MISTAKE." IN POPULAR RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE PARISIEN, FORMER SOCIALIST JUSTICE MINISTER ROBERT BADINTER ASKS "WHY IS EU MEMBERSHIP INDISPENSABLE FOR TURKEY TO ADDRESS ITS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS?"

THE FALLING DOLLAR AND PRESIDENT BUSH'S ECONOMIC POLICIES ARE FRONT-PAGE STORIES IN THE ECONOMIC PRESS. RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS HEADLINES: "BUSH TRIES TO RALLY ECONOMISTS TO HIS REFORMS." BUT IN HER EDITORIAL TITLED "VERY DEAR GEORGE", FRANCOISE CROUIGNEAU CONCLUDES THAT "BUSH'S REFORMS MAY TURN OUT TO BE TOO COSTLY." (SEE PART C)

LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION CARRIES AN OP-ED ON IRAN PENNED BY TWO RESEARCHERS FROM THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTE, PHILIP GORDON AND KENNETH POLLACK, WHO CONCLUDE: "THE BEST WAY FOR WASHINGTON TO PERSUADE IRAN TO GIVE UP ITS NUCLEAR POLICY IS BY PUTTING AN END TO ITS PRESENT POLICY OF BELITTLING IRAN AND TO JOIN THE EUROPEAN EFFORTS, EVEN IF THEY ARE FAR FROM PERFECT."

IN LEFT-OF-CENTER WEEKLY LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR, EDITORIALIST JEAN DANIEL SEES "A GLIMMER OF HOPE IN PALESTINE" THANKS TO "CHANGES IN THE U.S. APPROACH." (SEE PART C)

IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER WEEKLY LE POINT COLUMNIST BERNARD-HENRI LEVY PANS THE LATEST BOOK IN THE U.S. ON FRANCO-PHOBIA, "OUR OLDEST ENEMY," FOR ITS RIDICULOUS CLICHES. HE CONCLUDES IN HIS REVIEW: "FRANCE AND AMERICA DESERVE BETTER THAN THIS DELIRIUM, THIS OPPOSITION BETWEEN FRANCO-PHOBIA AND ANTI-AMERICANISM. FRANCE AND AMERICA CANNOT RESIGN THEMSELVES TO THIS SOMBER IMITATION OF ONE ANOTHER, WHICH ARE BOTH AS SUICIDAL. THE BOOK, ITS VULGAR ACCUMULATION OF STEREOTYPES AND ITS SHOW OF IGNORANCE, IN SHORT, THIS AMERICAN VISION OF 'FRENCH IDEOLOGY' RE-ENFORCES MY BELIEF THAT IT IS EMINENTLY URGENT TO REKINDLE THE BROKEN RELATIONSHIP (BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE U.S.)."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

MIDDLE EAST

"A GLIMMER OF HOPE"  
JEAN DANIEL IN LEFT-OF-CENTER WEEKLY LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR (12/16): "ALTHOUGH PESSIMISTIC IN PRINCIPLE AND SKEPTICAL BY EXPERIENCE, WE MUST NEVERTHELESS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOMETHING IS HAPPENING IN JERUSALEM, RAMALLAH AND OTHER MIDDLE EAST CAPITALS. THE CHANGE OF COURSE IS COMING FROM THE U.S. IT IS NOT ON THEIR OWN THAT THE ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS HAVE COME TOGETHER. PRESIDENT BUSH AND HIS ADMINISTRATION HAVE BEEN SENSITIVE TO THE JOINT APPEALS FROM TONY BLAIR AND PRESIDENT CHIRAC, WHO SPEAKING AS ONE, EXPLAINED THAT THE U.S. WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GET THE ASSISTANCE OF ITS ALLIES IN IRAQ UNLESS IT CHANGED ITS PARTISAN APPROACH TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. ARAFAT'S DEATH HAS CHANGED EVERYTHING. IT HAS GIVEN PRESIDENT BUSH THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS. FINALLY, BARGHOUTI'S LAST POLITICAL GESTURE, ACCEPTING NOT TO RUN IN THE PALESTINIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION., PROVES THAT THE PALESTINIANS ARE TIRED OF A PERPETUAL WAR WITH NO OUTCOME."

## U.S. DEFICIT

### "VERY DEAR GEORGE"

FRANCOISE CROUIGNEAU IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS (12/16): "PRESIDENT BUSH IS TURNING FROM GEO-STRATEGY TO THE AMERICAN ECONOMY AND GETTING HIS TROOPS TOGETHER TO WIN HIS BATTLE ON TWO FRONTS: SOCIAL SECURITY REFORMS AND TAX REFORMS. THE COST OF HIS REFORM PLANS ARE FUELING A CONTROVERSY BOTH IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD. IN HIS OPEN LETTER TO `DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH,' VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING POINTED TO THE DANGERS OF THE U.S. DEFICIT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM. AFTER THE NEO-CONS, THE NEO-ECONOMISTS ARE ENTERING THE AMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATE. THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING. AT HOME, PRESIDENT BUSH WILL HAVE TO CONVINCE SOME OF THE DEMOCRATS IF HE DOES NOT WANT ONE DAY TO BE REMEMBERED AS THE `TOO DEAR GEORGE W. BUSH.'"

## TURKEY

### "THE OTTOMAN LOGIC"

CLAUDE IMBERT IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER WEEKLY LE POINT (12/16): "TURKEY WANTS A FULL-BLOWN MARRIAGE OR NOTHING. BUT TODAY WE MUST COMMIT NEITHER TO AN IRREVOCABLE `YES' NOR TO TURNING OUR BACKS TO TURKEY. WE SHOULD OFFER TURKEY AN ASSOCIATION.

TURKEY, AS THE GREAT NATION THAT IT IS, DREAMS OF THE WEST BUT MOVES TOWARDS THE EAST, THE CASPIAN AND THE CAUCASUS. IT IS STILL HAMPERED BY HEAVY BURDENS, SUCH AS CYPRUS, ARMENIA AND KURDISTAN. IT IS WISE BOTH FOR EUROPE AND TURKEY TO ALLOW FOR TIME. IN TEN OR FIFTEEN YEARS WE MAY BE IN A POSITION TO DECIDE. MOSTLY, LET US NOT MAKE A HASTY DECISION THAT WILL LEAVE NO WAY OUT."

### "A DESIRE FOR EUROPE"

PASCAL AUBERT IN CENTRIST LA TRIBUNE (12/16): "TURKEY OR NOT TURKEY? THE FACT IS THAT EUROPE MADE A PROMISE IT MUST HONOR. THERE WILL BE NEGOTIATIONS AND AT THE END OF THOSE NEGOTIATIONS THERE MUST BE THE PERSPECTIVE OF MEMBERSHIP. IT IS UP TO TURKEY NOW TO PROVE THE DEPTH OF ITS DESIRE FOR EUROPE AND TO GIVE ALL THE TOKENS EUROPE IS ASKING FOR."

### "A DOMESTIC EMERGENCY"

NICOLAS BEYOUT IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (12/16): "FRANCE IS CONFUSED AND FEELS THAT THE CHOICES MADE BY ITS PRESIDENT CARRY RISKS FOR FRANCE. AND THAT WHILE HE HAS BEEN DEALING WITH AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD, HE HAS SOMEWHAT FORGOTTEN TO DEAL WITH FRANCE AND ITS CONCERNs. A MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR THE PRESIDENT, BEYOND EUROPE, IS CONCENTRATING ON FRANCE, ITS REFORMS AND THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE." WOLFF